

Open Neighborhood

“Re-Visioning Kelley’s Corner”

Project Summary

The OpenNeighborhood/Re-Visioning Kelley's Corner project is a partnership between the Town of Acton and faculty and students of Tufts University's Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning Department (UEP). It runs with the help of The Discovery Museums, (www.discoverymuseums.org), the Acton-Boxborough Parent Involvement Project (www.actonpip.org), and is supported, in part, by a grant from the Acton Boxborough Cultural Council.

The OpenNeighborhood/Re-Visioning Kelley's Corner project aims to learn how new technology and tools like the virtual-reality program SecondLife can bring people together and be useful in a planning process. The project also compares computer model building/simulation (with the SecondLife program - which creates a 3d virtual world where an avatar™ can walk around and interact with others) to the more common hands-on model building approach (with Styrofoam cut-outs, cardboard, etc.). For the project, a virtual Kelley's Corner was built. Kelley's Corner appeared to be an appropriate test site because it encompasses a significant intersection in Acton, is known by almost all residents, and many have strong feelings about it.

In the fall of 2009, over 100 Acton residents and business owners participated in the project. Tools were incorporated into the SecondLife program allowing users to create their own 2D-vision of how to improve the area in the future. Paper, pencils, Styrofoam cut-outs, and other crafts were provided to people who didn't want to use the computer but wanted to participate.

In spring 2010, the project received the Massachusetts Cultural Council's (MCC) Gold Star Award for excellence in community arts and culture.

Tuesday, May 25, 2010 will be the final public event. The event will summarize and present to the Town the results from the computer exercises and hands-on activities. There will be a new Kelley's Corner simulation and demonstration based on the findings. People will be able to vote for their favorite ideas and explore computer models. The public input received will be used by Tufts faculty and students in their academic research and may also influence planning efforts by the Town of Acton as it updates its Master Plan in 2010.



P I P Parent Involvement Project



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